

Fort Tejon, near Lebec
U.S. Highway 99 (Golden State Highway, Ridge Route)
Kern County, California.

HABS. CAL. 39

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of California #3

Historic American Buildings Survey
Henry F. Withey, District Officer
407 So. Western Avenue
Los Angeles, California

Fort Tejon, near Lebec.
U.S. Highway 99 (Golden State Highway, Ridge Route)
Kern County, California.

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Owner: El Tejon Ranchos, Inc. (Harry Chandler and Associates)
202 W. First St. Los Angeles, California.

Date of erection: Construction of buildings begun in the Fall of 1854 and continued for a period of three years.

Architect: Officers of the Fort, it is believed.

Builder:

Present Condition: In a much ruined state. The Barracks Building, with a new corrugated iron roof, is the best preserved. A fire during 1935 left but the walls of the Officers' Quarters standing. The original structures consisted of fifteen buildings, of which but five remain.

Number of stories: The existing buildings are of one story, except for the Barracks building, which has a basement level with the grade at the north end.

Materials of construction: Foundations are of rough cut native stone, laid in adobe mortar. Walls of basement in Officers' Quarters are of the same stone, laid up in lime mortar.

Walls are of sun-dried adobe brick laid in adobe mortar. Interior of Officers' Quarters, Barracks Building, and Smoke House were plastered with adobe mortar and finished with a smooth lime putty coat. Two rooms in the Soldiers' quarters were lime plastered. The present walls show no evidence of exterior plaster. Roofs are of pine framing, covered with shakes and galvanized iron. Floors are of matched pine flooring.

Other existing records: Herbert Howe Bancroft, "History of California" 7 vols; - Report for Fort Tejon, Kern County, California, prepared by Olaf T. Hagen, Acting Chief Western Division, Branch of Historic Sites and Buildings, National Parks Service, Department of the Interior, dated Feb. 21, 1936. This report was based on a manuscript and notes supplied by Arthur Woodward, Curator of History of the Los Angeles Museum, and made a part of the report. It includes a bibliography of authorities. - A typewritten report dated Sept. 1932, written by Edwin J. Symmes, architect, of Bakersfield, and submitted to Edwin D. Drury, executive secretary, Department of Material Resources, Division of Parks, 650 Mills Building, San Francisco.

Additional data: in 1852 Edward Fitzgerald Beale, U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, inaugurated a system of semi-military, semi-agricultural reservations, to deal with the problems of bandits and

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Fort Tejon

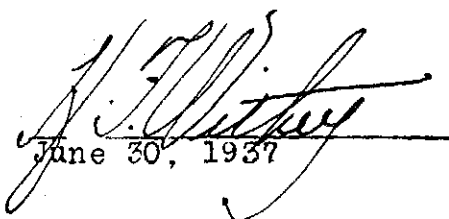
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cattle thieves in California. Fort Tejon was the first one established, it being in the south east corner of the San Joaquin Valley. The post for this reservation was fixed in the Canada de Los Uvas, about five miles south of the entrance to the canyon. Here at Fort Tejon was established a company of the First Dragoons of the U.S. Army; here for a period of ten years (Aug. 10, 1854 to Sept. 15, 1864) centered the political, social and economic life of the south San Joaquin valley. On June 24, in 1854, Maj. Gen. John E. Woolf, Commandant of the Dept. of the Pacific, gave orders to erect quarters for one company of Dragoons and one company of Infantry. Thus had the present buildings now remaining at the Fort, their beginning.

The San Francisco Daily Bulletin, Jan. 17, 1857, reported several earthquake shocks to have occurred at Fort Tejon on Jan. 9th which caused much damage to the buildings, several of which were only partly completed at the time.

A visitor to the Fort in November, 1857, reported in the Los Angeles Star of Jan. 27th, 1858, a brief description of the buildings, of which there were fifteen in all, and a part of them two stories in height, plastered and white-washed on the exterior.

The writer has found no plans or description of the Fort as it was in 1864 when abandoned, complete or accurate enough to make possible the drafting of plans of the full group of buildings. Plans and photographs have been made only of the five buildings at present standing. Two of the structured photographed and drawn have been designated as "Soldiers Quarters" and "Smoke House" but they may originally have served other purposes.



June 30, 1937

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